

BLABY RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

CO Knayborough
Leicester

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the year 1943.



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Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I beg to present the Annual Report on the Health of your district for the year 1943. It has been kept brief in view of the circumstance of the times.

						<u>1943</u>	<u>1942</u>
Births, legitimate	M.	359	F.	319			
" illegitimate	M.	<u>22</u>	F.	<u>16</u>			
Totals:-		<u>381</u>		<u>335</u>	Total	716	612
Birth-rate	...	...	...	...	...	20.2	17.1
Birth-rate for England & Wales	...	...	...	...	...		15.8
Still-births 17.	(Two were illegitimate).						
Deaths	Males 183.	Females 193.			Total	376	318
Non-civilian deaths are excluded.							
Crude Death-rate	...	...	...	...	...	10.6	8.9
Comparative death-rate. R.G.'s factor not available.							
Death-rate (Civilian) for England & Wales	...	...	...	...	...	12.1	11.6
Deaths of Infants under one year of age	...	...	...	...	...	20	31
	Male 14 (2 illegitimate)		Female 6				
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 births	...	...	...	...	...	28	50
Infant Mortality Rate for England & Wales	...	...	...	...	...	49	49

Causes of Death

The chief causes of death were: Heart Disease, 74; Cancer, 49; Intra-cranial vascular lesions ("stroke"), 44; Pneumonia, 11; Bronchitis, 17; Tuberculosis, 23; Influenza, 14.

Comments on Statistics

The tuberculosis deaths, 23, have again gone up, the average for the five pre-war years, 1935-9, being only 15. This corresponds with the experience of other parts of the country and may be ascribed to war conditions.

The crude death rate, 10.6, compares with 9.1 for the five pre-war years. The infant mortality of 28 per 1,000 births compares with 50 so shows a very remarkable decrease, all the more remarkable in view of war conditions. The figure for England and Wales remains stationary at 49.

When we consider that 1943 was the fourth year of the greatest war the world has ever known, and when we consider, too, the terrible conditions and resulting high death rate in so many countries, one feels justified in saying that the vital statistics for Blaby, in common with those for the whole of this country, continue to be surprisingly good. We, in this country, have indeed very much to be thankful for.

As regards the birth-rate, the figure for Blaby has gone up considerably. There were 716 births as against 612 in 1942, and an average of 467 for the five pre-war years.

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Incidence of Notifiable Disease

<u>Disease</u>	<u>Total cases reported</u>	<u>Deaths</u>
Scarlet Fever	63	0
Diphtheria	11	0
Pneumonia	23	11
Erysipelas	9	0
Measles	489	0
Puerperal Pyrexia	4	0
Whooping cough	151	0
Cerebro-spinal Fever	6	1
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1	0

Scarlet Fever. The parishes chiefly affected were: Glen Parva, 12; Blaby, 12; Whetstone, 6; Narborough, 5.

Diphtheria. Of the 11 cases not one occurred in a child who had been immunised. Braunstone, 3; Countesthorpe, 3; Elmesthorpe, 2.

Measles. This disease occurred in epidemic form, the parishes chiefly affected being: Glen Parva, 78; Glenfield, 69; Braunstone, 58; Kirby Muxloe, 58; Huncote, 43; Enderby, 31.

Whooping Cough. This also occurred in epidemic form, the parishes chiefly affected being: Narborough, 28; Braunstone, 23; Cosby, 18; Glenfield 16; Glen Parva, 15; Blaby, 13.

The outbreaks were of a mild character and there were no deaths from scarlet fever, diphtheria, measles or whooping cough.

Diphtheria Immunisation

Annual Statement, 1943

Centre	Sessions held	D.I. completed		3rd Inj.	
		Under 5	Over 5	Under 5	Over 5
Ravenhurst Rd. Sch.	5	88	24	1	
Glenfield	7	51	34		1
Holmfield Avenue	4	9	34		31
Braunstone I.W.C.	4	21	3		
Cosby Infant School	6	20	8		
Blaby	6	11	22		2
Narborough	7	20	9		
Glen Hills	7	37	5		1
Countesthorpe:					
St. Andrew's School	2	13	4		
Council School	7	27	17		
Croft	6	28	7		
Whetstone	6	8	6		
Stoney Stanton	6	24	20		
Sapcote	4	6	3		
Enderby:					
Junior School	6	61	43		
Modern School	2		1		
Kilby	1	3	8		1

Diphtheria ImmunisationAnnual Statement, 1943

(Continued)

Centre	Sessions held	D.I. completed		3rd Inj.	
		Under 5	Over 5	Under 5	Over 5
Huncote	7	14	13		
Thurlaston	4	7	8		
Sharnford	5	10	6		
Kirby Muxloe	3	16	14		
21 centres	105	474	289	1	36
Private practice & S. Wigston Clinic		62	72		
Total		536	361		

As the appointment of your M.O.H. is a joint one with the Lutterworth R.C.D., it may be of interest if the corresponding figures for Lutterworth are also given. They were as follows:

Children under 5 - 212; Over 5 - 181; Number of Sessions - 80.

Total No. of Children now Immunised

During the three years, 1941-43, that this work has been carried on the total number of children known to have been immunised is as follows:

	<u>Blaby</u>	<u>Lutterworth</u>
Under 5	2026	705
Over 5	<u>3324</u>	<u>1444</u>
	5350	2149

Proportion of Children Immunised

The following are the figures as returned to the Ministry of Health for the end of 1943:

	<u>Blaby</u>
Under 5	65%
Over 5	80%

Amount of Work entailed by Immunisation

Although the majority of children have now been immunised the work entailed by immunisation is little affected. It is true that the number of children attending at each session held is much smaller than it used to be, but the ground has to be covered as before. Also as children who were done as babies reach school age they will need to receive a further "boosting" injection in order to maintain the protection, which tends to wear out with the lapse of time.

As has been pointed out in previous reports, this work of immunisation must necessarily take up a large amount of the time of your M.O.H. During the year a total of 185 sessions were held in the two districts, and the car mileage entailed amounted to 1218 miles (Blaby, 676; Lutterworth, 542).

As stated above, there were only 11 cases of diphtheria reported during the year, and not one of these was a child who had been immunised. There was no fatal case.

HOUSING.

The primary need in every community (after food and clothing) is homes for the people, i.e. dwelling houses. This takes precedence over all other communal needs. The building of dwelling houses has

necessarily been suspended since the outbreak of the war, with the result that a great shortage of houses now exists, and this will be much intensified when, the war being over, demobilisation occurs. Also existing houses, the condition of which - even before the war - was too often most unsatisfactory, are now in a still worse condition owing to the difficulty of executing necessary repairs.

Fortunately there is reason to believe that the Government is fully alive to the situation, and steps are already being taken to overtake the shortage by preparing plans, building sites, etc. But although active work may be begun as soon as the war is over, it is obvious that lack of ordinary building materials, and the disorganisation of the building trade due to the war, is likely to cause serious delay unless special measures are taken. Among the measures proposed is the use of other building materials to supplement brick, e.g. steel and concrete. There has been much said recently about "pre-fabricated" houses, manufactured in factories by mass production methods, and then rapidly assembled and put together on the actual site. The life of such emergency houses is only intended to be of limited duration, and as a safeguard against their being kept in existence after they have served their purpose it is proposed that they should only be erected by local authorities who would retain the ownership of them. As a temporary expedient to prevent - or at least reduce - the heart-breaking delay in the provision of homes for demobilised men which occurred after the last war, there is much to be said for these pre-fabricated houses, and there is no reason why they should not be healthy and comfortable to live in. As a different class of labour will be utilised in their construction they should not interfere with the provision of brick houses as rapidly as circumstances permit.

Report of Central Housing Advisory Committee

As regards rural housing, the Government have just published (May, 1944) the Third Report of the Rural Housing Sub-Committee of the Central Advisory Committee. This Sub-Committee, under the Chairmanship of Sir Arthur Hobhouse, has been studying the problem of rural housing for about two years, and this report is a very valuable contribution to its solution. It is too exhaustive for more than a brief summary of its recommendations so far as they affect rural district councils. It is pointed out that after the war the administration of the Housing Acts will be in the fore-front of local government services, and the Report urges the necessity of embarking on a long-term housing programme. The first necessity is that there shall be an adequate staff, both technical and clerical, and there will also be a need for more sanitary inspectors. In order that the woman's point of view may be adequately represented, it is recommended that R.D.C. should co-opt one or more suitable women on to their Housing Committees, as they are empowered to do so by Sec. 85, Local Government Act, 1933. Another essential condition is that there should be higher and more uniform standards in assessing housing conditions.

It is recommended that in each county there should be set up a Joint Committee consisting of representatives from all the R.D.C. in the county and of the County Council. These Joint Committees would not have statutory functions but be for consultation and discussion; and it is considered desirable that they should be set up at once before the end of the war. It is believed that such committees could do much towards raising the standard of housing throughout a county.

An essential step preliminary to any long-term housing programme is a comprehensive survey of housing conditions in every rural district and it is suggested that this should be begun at once. It is to be feared that there would be practical difficulties in doing this in many districts owing to shortage of staff.

As regards reconditioning, i.e. the thorough bringing up-to-date of houses that are worth saving, R.D.C. are urged not to hesitate about making use of their powers to make grants to owners who are willing to

undertake this work of reconditioning (which goes far beyond ordinary repairs), half of such grants being contributed by the National Exchequer. Councils which neglect to take advantage of their power to make such grants are acquiescing in the continuation of unsatisfactory conditions. The Government is recommended to increase the maximum amount of the grant at present permissible to compensate for the increase in building costs.

In conclusion it may safely be said that if the recommendations in this report were whole-heartedly carried out, a very great improvement in rural housing conditions, which at present leave so much to be desired, would be effected in the course of a very few years.

WATER SUPPLY

After housing, one of the primary sanitary needs of every community is an ample supply of good water. It is much to be deplored that so many of the rural villages throughout the country are still without such a supply. This is one of the great blots on our sanitary administration which will certainly have to be dealt with after the war if we are to live up to the high ideals as regards our duty to our fellow men which have been so freely enunciated during the war. Admittedly the difficulties, both technical and financial, are great in the case of many villages, but difficulties exist to be overcome, and public opinion is now becoming awakened to the urgency of this question.

The Government has announced its intention of taking the matter up in earnest after the war and has brought forward a Bill - The Rural Water Supplies and Sewage Bill - in which substantial help is promised. Clause 3 extends the duty of every local authority, including rural district councils, to provide a piped supply of water to every rural locality in their district in which there are houses or schools, though they will not be required to do anything which is not practicable at a reasonable cost. Introducing the Bill in the House of Commons on 3rd May, 1944, the Minister of Health said that the measure was for the conservation and better utilisation of the country's water supplies, the further extension of public water supplies and sewerage in rural localities, and for the better management of rivers. He said that at present about 30% of the rural population of England and Wales had not got a piped supply, either into their houses or within easy reach. This represented some 2,000,000 people. A new feature of the Bill was that the costs of providing water and sewerage schemes should no longer fall on the parish alone but be shared with the National tax-payer, the County rate-payer and District rate-payer. The contribution of the National Exchequer would be fixed at a maximum of £15,000,000 for water supplies and sewerage schemes together for England and Wales. He concluded by expressing the hope that within a measurable time there would be a piped water supply in very nearly all sizable groups of houses. Moreover the Board of Agriculture proposed to extend financial assistance for water for agricultural purposes so that isolated farm houses and cottages would also be included.

The Minister of Health, speaking on the second reading, said that the Bill encouraged local authorities to draw up schemes knowing that they would not be frustrated by lack of means. Plans for mains and sewers could be prepared now, and when the time came to do the work the Government would come to the aid of rural authorities who found the cost beyond what the rate-payers and consumers could reasonably be expected to bear. The Bill provided far more generous provision for water supply than had ever been thought of before.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL

Next in importance after Housing and Water Supply is sewage disposal. The problems of water supply and sewage disposal are largely interdependent. It is impossible to adopt the "water-carriage" system and substitute water closets for the most insanitary and highly objectional pai

closets or privies until a piped supply of water is available; and the provision of a piped supply of water makes the provision of a proper sewerage system much more urgent.

MILK SUPPLY

Although substantial improvements have been effected in the Nation's milk supply in past years, it cannot be denied that the conditions under which milk is produced still leave a great deal to be desired. In many places the facilities for production of clean and safe milk are quite inadequate, e.g. structure of cowsheds, drainage, lighting, water supply, etc. The last named is perhaps the most serious defect. Under the circumstances existing in many dairy farms it is really too much to expect that clean milk will be produced.

Food & Drugs (Milk & Dairies) Bill

Admittedly the difficulties to be overcome are great, and the Government has come to the conclusion that the most satisfactory and effective way of achieving substantial improvement in the milk supply of the country is by a radical and drastic change in procedure. They have therefore introduced the above Bill, often referred to as the Clean Milk Bill, under which the duty of safeguarding the Nation's milk supply will be largely taken from the local authorities and be transferred to the Board of Agriculture. It is believed that thereby procedure will be simplified and unified. The Bill is very controversial and there has been considerable opposition both in and out of Parliament, so further comment had better be deferred. There is a good deal to be said both for and against the new proposals.

Laboratory Work

In connection with the diagnosis and supervision of Infectious Disease the following examinations were made at the County Council's Laboratory:-

Sputa for Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	158
Swabs for Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	176
Milk examinations (bacteriological)	...	...	...	...	242
Urine (General and bacteriological)	...	...	...	...	38
Urine for Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	20
Milk for Phosphatase Test	...	...	...	...	14
Blood for Vasserman Test	...	...	...	...	4
Films for gonococci	...	...	...	...	11
Sewage and water analysis	...	...	...	...	31
Miscellaneous	...	...	...	...	30
					<u>724</u>

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

I regret to have to record the death of Mr. A. Stevens which occurred in October, 1943, after a prolonged illness. Mr. Stevens had been Sanitary Inspector to the Blaby R.D.C. for very many years and was greatly respected on account of his integrity, tact and devotion to duty. He was succeeded by Mr. J.J. Galsworthy, M.R.San.I., who had been appointed as Assistant Sanitary Inspector earlier in year after Mr. Stevens had been taken ill.

The following abbreviated particulars are abstracted from Mr. Galsworthy's annual statement.

(1) Water

- 28 Samples were taken for analysis.
- 14 wells were closed for drinking.
- 1 well was cleansed.

There was a temporary shortage of water at Enderby through insufficient pressure.

(2) Drainage and Sewerage

1 Cesspool was abolished. At the end of 1943 there were 150 remaining.

(3) Closet Accommodation:-

Pail closets replaced by water-carriage	35
The Number of pail closets in the District is 2505:	
of W.C's.	5055

(4) Sanitary Inspection of the Area:-

Total number of complaints received during the year	156
(Most of these referred to accumulations of ashes or salvage material).	
Total number of defects or nuisances discovered	126
" " " notices served - Statutory 2	
Informal 48	50
" " " notices complied with, Statutory 9	
Informal 82	91

(includes outstanding notices from 1942)

(5) Shops and Offices:-

Sanitary conveniences.	Defects found 2	Remedied 2
	+ 3 outstanding	
Ventilation	Defects found 2	Remedied 2

HOUSING

1. Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the year:-

(1) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under the Public Health or Housing Acts) . .	122
Number of inspections made for the purpose . .	133
(2) Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 and 1932 .	72
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	40
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation . .	32

2. Remedy of Defects during the year without Service of Formal Notices:-

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers	30
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3. Action under Statutory Powers during the year:-

(a) Proceedings under Sections 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936:-	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs . .	0
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit (by owners) after service of formal notices .	2
(b) Proceedings under Public Health Acts:-	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	7
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices . . .	5

4. Housing Act, 1935. Overcrowding

(a).	i.	Number of dwellings known as overcrowded at end of year	13
	ii.	Number of families dwelling therein	14
	iii.	Number of persons dwelling therein	100
(b)	i.	Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	13
(c)	i.	Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year	6
	ii.	Number of persons concerned in such cases	30

It is suspected that there are many more cottages which are overcrowded. There are practically no vacant houses in the District.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

Milk:-

The Sanitary Inspector submits the following particulars for the year:-

Retailers:	Number on Register	.	.	.	.	.	.	16
(Other than Cow Keepers)	Number of inspections	.	.	.	.	.	.	42
	Number of contraventions found	.	.	.	.	.	.	6
Cowkeepers:	Number on Register	.	.	.	.	.	.	171
(including producers who retail their own milk):	Number of inspections of premises	.	.	.	.	.	.	246

Licenses were granted to one dealer in "T.T." milk, to one in "Accredited" milk, and to one in Pasteurized milk, also to one Pasteurizing plant.

17 Designated milk samples and 82 other samples were submitted for examination at the County Laboratory. Six of the former and 24 of the latter failed to reach the required degree of bacterial cleanliness.

MEAT AND OTHER FOODS

Private slaughter houses:-

No. of regional slaughter houses	19
No. of animals slaughtered	726
No. of animals examined	220

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

(signed) C. KILLICK MILLARD.

Medical Officer of Health.

The Gilroes,
Leicester.
19th June, 1944.